

West Virginia Transportation Coordinating Council

United We Ride Grant Proposal

Background: For the past several years, various governmental and nongovernmental agencies including grass roots organizations within West Virginia have attempted to develop strategies to coordinate transportation throughout the State. Unfortunately, these efforts never came into being because of barriers ranging from turf wars to uncompromising statutes. In February of 2004, recognizing a need for the coordination of transportation services, former Governor Bob Wise sent representatives from three state agencies to the United We Ride Leadership Forum. In March 2004, following guidelines established in the United We Ride Framework for Action, he signed Executive Order No. 5-04 that created the West Virginia Transportation Coordinating Council. Members of the Council are appointed by the Governor. Serving as members of the Council are representatives from:

- State Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator
- Bureau of Senior Services
- Department of Education
- Workforce Development Division
 - Development Office
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - Division of Public Transit (Council Chair)
- Department of Health & Human Resources (DHHR)
 - Bureau for Public Health
 - Bureau for Medical Services (Medicaid)
 - Bureau for Children and Families

- Office of Behavioral Health
- Fair Shake Network (state advocacy organization for people with disabilities)
- Public transportation community (2)
- Emergency medical transportation provider
- Perdidos (a state transportation advocacy organization)
- Public transportation consumers with disabilities (2)

Governor's Charge: In order to establish clear direction and clarify expectations for the Coordinating Council, Governor Wise provided the following charge to Council members:

To study issues pertaining to the effective and efficient use of transportation resources including, but not limited to:

- Coordinate transportation services.
- Eliminate waste and overlap caused by duplicated agency efforts.
- Eliminate service gaps to enhance citizen access to all available transportation and resources.
- Coordinate efforts with the United States Department of Transportation.
- Participate in and apply for grants through the federal United We Ride program.

Mission Statement: The first action of the Coordinating Council was to develop a mission statement based on the Governor's charge and other elements of the Executive Order. The mission statement is:

“Create strategies to increase current resources, eliminate duplicated agency efforts, and centralize the management of resources.”

In January of 2005, West Virginia was one of the states to receive a United We Ride planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration. The State contracted with RLS and Associates in Dayton, Ohio, to conduct a survey and focus groups of transportation providers in the state. The final plan will be completed by the end of the year. We have included the Executive Summary of the Report and those parts of the draft plan which are addressed in the grant application.

Work Plan: Using the draft action plan and the United We Ride Framework for Action and the coordination study developed under the planning grant as guiding tools, the overall coordination project for West Virginia will include two parts. The first part will consist of identifying a region of the State in which to develop a pilot program for local coordination efforts. Our plan is to use the success of this pilot program to assist other regions of the state to coordinate transportation in the future. The second part of the project will consist of a statewide effort to address issues which are barriers to a coordinated transportation system.

Part I: Part one of the grant is to identify a region of the state to develop a pilot program of coordinated transportation. Local regions will be invited to submit a letter of interest in participating in the pilot program to the Transportation Coordinating Council. The Council will determine the local region with input and agreement from key people in the area. This process will be completed within the first month or two of notification of the grant award. The Council will be conducting a transportation workshop with public and private transportation providers,

advocates, and other invited parties on December 7, 2005. At this workshop we will ask for letters of interest in the advent we get the implementation grant. The Council will review these letters at their meeting on January 5, 2006, to begin the decision making process. When a decision is made, the Council will contract with a mobility manager who will be responsible for the following activities:

Phase I: (Months 1 - 6) Work with all public and private transportation providers, who have been identified in the coordination study report and in the West Virginia Division of Public Transit's *Transportation Providers Directory*, state and local government entities, local business leaders and chamber of commerce(s) to identify and develop a transportation coordination plan which would work best in their area. To assess the needs of transportation users or potential users and to determine where people can and cannot access transportation due to barriers and identify the barriers. Two to four focus groups (depending on the size of the region) will be conducted in the region to get input from people with disabilities, senior citizens, low income individuals and others who have an interest in coordinated transportation. The information gained from these focus groups will be incorporated into the transportation coordination plan. In addition, a systematic look or inventory of vehicles, staff, volunteers, funding, marketing materials, technology and other assets in the selected region will be reviewed to obtain an accurate account of its existing resources.

On-going throughout the grant period will be an educational component for transportation users, providers, social service agencies, and hospital discharge planners regarding the reason for and the need for coordinated transportation in their area. It is clear from the RLS study and the focus forums that the educational component is a key first step in assisting all stakeholders in defining and communicating what is meant by coordinated transportation.

Another on-going activity for the mobility manager will be to serve as a link between the local area, state government entities and the Council to assist in overcoming transportation barriers which he/she encounters when developing the selected regions coordination plan.

Phase II: (Months 6-12) The mobility manager will:

- Develop a referral list within the area of transportation providers. This list will include information on the types of services they offer, when they are offered, fees, and their physical accessibility.
- Work with local personnel to identify possible funding options within the region which can be used to match federal and state funding opportunities.
- Work with the Homeland Security Program at West Virginia University to address the issue of emergency evacuation of people with disabilities, senior citizens and low-income individuals in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. On average, West Virginia experiences a major flood every five years and minor flooding every year. West Virginia also has a concentration of chemical manufacturing plants which at times experience leakages necessitating the evacuation of people from their homes. In addition, the state has an interstate system and a railroad system which daily transports chemicals and other bio-hazardous materials through populated areas. At this time there is no comprehensive emergency evacuation plan for individuals with disabilities, senior citizens or those without their own vehicle

Part II: One recommendation from RLS was for West Virginia to better utilize transportation funds. RLS found instances where Federal funds appropriated for the state have gone unused due to lack of formula matching funds. They recommended the state look to the state transit

agency as the source of capital funding for vehicles used in specialized and human services transportation and state human service agencies use their funds to provide services. The Council will begin to address this issue in the grant year by establishing a subcommittee or subcommittees which will meet with the various state agencies to determine what actions need to take place in order to follow the RLS recommendation. We do not expect to finish this process by the end of the grant.

Another recommendation from the focus groups and RLS was to explore the possibility of streamlining transportation funding sources and billing procedures used by different social service agencies. The Council plans to begin the investigation on how to best use technology to coordinate the provision of services and reimbursements during the grant year. Again, we do not anticipate this will be finished prior to the end of the grant since high level government officials will need to be involved and some of the changes may require legislative action.

A key component the Council will undertake is the statewide education of public and private transportation providers, consumers, social service agencies and others on transportation coordination and what services are currently available throughout the state.

Evaluation Plan: The Council will appoint a grant committee, which will meet at least quarterly, to monitor and evaluate the grant's operations. The Committee will establish measurable objectives which support the overall grant goals. These measures will be reliable and credible; flexible and clear; realistic and timely; and are accepted by all stakeholders. Most of the measures will be measured quantitatively and will include such things as:

- The number of focus groups conducted, number of people in attendance, and number of different interests represented.
- Number of memorandums of understandings signed and number underway.

Other components of their oversight will include:

- The submission of a quarterly report by the mobility manager which will include who he/she has contacted, what activities he/she has been involved in, and other information the committee thinks it needs.
- State agencies will monitor the extent of involvement of their local offices, the number of rides being provided and any problems they encounter as a result of rider mixing, etc.
- The committee will meet with the mobility manager and other key players from the selected region to conduct a six-month and year-end review. This meeting will include identifying successes, barriers and other problems encountered. A detailed report from this meeting will be presented to the full Council.
- Subcommittee reports will be provided at Council meetings and to the grant oversight committee. These reports will include identification of areas of interest, and barriers or problems.
- At the end of the grant year subcommittees will issue a report which will outline their activities and if and/or how their issue(s) can be addressed by the state.

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Budget

Item	Description	Cost
Mobility Manager RFP	Development and issuance of an expression of interest for a project Mobility Manager	In-kind
Mobility Manager	All costs involved with contracting of services including but not limited to salary, benefits, travel, lodging, postage, and telecommunications	\$65,000
Statewide efforts	Costs associated with hosting educational events, meetings, etc.	\$10,000
Travel for Council Members	Travel costs for Council members attending subcommittees and educational events	In-kind
TOTAL REQUEST		\$75,000

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Budget Narrative

The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transit, will incur any expenses associated with the development and issuance of an expression of interest for a mobility manager to work in the selected region.

The majority of the grant funds (\$65,000) will be used to contract with a mobility manager to work in the selected region of the state. The \$65,000 will include but not be limited to:

- Salary and benefits,
- Travel expenses,
- Postage,
- Telecommunications,
- Development and duplication of materials, and
- Costs associated with conducting public forums and educational events

The remainder of grant funds, (\$10,000) will be used to off-set costs associated with the statewide efforts of the Council. These costs will include, but not be limited to:

- Any subcommittee expenses incurred while transacting business such as conference calling, meeting room fees, or refreshments,
- Hosting a state-wide educational event, and
- Development and duplication of materials.

Travel expenses for Council members to attend committee and subcommittee meetings and educational events will be in-kind from their various organizations.